

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

March 3, 2004

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Shea.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Roy, Gatsas, Guinta (late), Osborne, Porter, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Forest

Absent: Sysyn and Thibault

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Siobhan Tautkus, 132 Arah Street, Manchester, stated:

I'm here to ask you to oppose the Federal halfway house here in Manchester. Today we have over 1,000 people on parole or probation in downtown Manchester. Four hundred of those people are parolees. They are here as a direct result of the halfway house, the 69-bed halfway house that we have here. Those programs in the halfway house last anywhere from three to four months. In order to be paroled from the halfway house you have to have a job and a place to live. So by necessity those parolees are living in downtown Manchester and working in this area for the duration of their term. Now those terms could be anywhere from four, five even seven years living in the City while on parole. So those numbers do fluctuate but they do have a tendency to escalate simply because of the term. To add more to this existing population would not only pose a danger to downtown but to the City. There are different reports on the recidivism rate. At one point up to 40 percent of these people will return to prison for new crimes. In today's paper the figure in 1996 from New Hampshire's prison was 25 percent, but whichever figure it is we know that there is a certain percentage

criminal activity that does go on with this population. And that they are committing new crimes and that does pose an enormous burden on our Police Department, one that isn't measured, can't be measured, but we know has a pretty big impact. The halfway house that's now being proposed, the 20 beds, if there is a four month program, will then lead to 60 Federal parolees in downtown Manchester and they could add beds any time they want once that's proposed. We would have no control over that; in five years it could be 60 beds. We don't know. But we do know that we're trying to revitalize downtown Manchester. I do not oppose halfway houses. They are a necessary part of a correction system, but I do think that Manchester does it's fair share and if a halfway house on the Federal scale is warranted for New Hampshire, then it does belong in another city.

Glenn Brackett, 46 Third Street, Manchester, stated:

I am the business manager of Local 2320 IBEW here in Manchester. We represent the telephone workers for Verizon. The reason I've come here tonight to speak with you is my opposition and the opposition of my fellow workers in regards to the draft Resolution to oppose House Bill 1416. And the reason I feel it necessary to come speak to you tonight is because for all the issues that are in front of us, jobs stand out. Over the past three years my membership has lost one third of it's jobs, due to increased competition from local open market broadband companies, and specifically wireless providers. This HB 1416, if it is allowed sunset, will put an unfair burden on the rank and file workers in the simple respect is that this is not a revenue stream that is victimless. If the sunset provision is allowed, if this Bill is allowed to tax pole and conduit for the Verizon telephone systems, this will be reflected in the monthly telephone bills of every person that has a landline telephone service. Over the past three years the number of people who have left the landline business has put such a burden on our workforce there is no possible way that we can allow this to keep happening. I ask you tonight please consider opposing the Resolution to oppose HB 1416.

Laura Magzis, Concord, stated:

Though I live in Concord I like to travel to nearby towns and cities to experience not only concerts and plays, but also open spaces and waterways. I'm very disappointed that Manchester is considering so seriously the development of Hackett Hill especially at a time when it seems as if other towns and cities are scrambling to preserve open space. So I'm here tonight to ask you very seriously think and consider and weigh the costs and benefits before pondering what seems to me a very precious part of our inheritance as New Hampshire citizens.

Claudia Carr, 17 Vassar Street, Manchester, stated:

I am opposed to the halfway house. I am a mortgage banker and I can see wherever it goes what it is going to do to the value of the property and the mortgages at some point. Again, I oppose it and I would hope you take it very seriously.

Erle Pierce, 900 Elm Street, Manchester, stated:

I am the Government Affairs Director with Verizon here in Manchester and I am here tonight to speak regarding Item 6 under New Business, the Resolution regarding HB 1416. I believe the Resolution you'll be discussing is incorrect with regards to the status of the current bill. This past fall a joint House and Senate committee studied the property tax exemption for wooden poles and conduit. This joint study committee recommended the exemption be made permanent. The New Hampshire House Ways and Means Committee then amended and passed the Bill to temporarily extend the property tax exemption for those wooden poles and conduit and to establish a committee to study issues related to that exemption. The issues that the study committee will take a look at include whether or not the property tax exemption should be continued, the feasibility of sharing communication services tax, and potential property tax revenues between local communities and the State, wire line company profits, the passthrough of customers of any new property taxes, the exemption and methods to assess and access those telephone poles and conduit. I ask that you consider this Resolution carefully this evening before taking any action. I did bring along with me copies of the amended Bill if you do not already have them and I will be here during the regular meeting and available to answer questions.

Mayor Baines stated last evening Mike was selected as co-recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award along with Dr. Richard Gustafson. I want personally thank you and on behalf of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the citizens of Manchester thank you for your distinguished service to our community.

Mike Hickey, 900 Elm Street, Manchester, stated:

Thank you Mayor. I just wanted to comment very briefly to the Board and to the Mayor in regards to the draft Resolution you have before you tonight on HB 1416. On behalf of my company and the 1,000 Manchester based employees I represent here tonight, I ask that you consider the facts surrounding the Resolution very carefully before you make your final decision. I think Verizon and the City have enjoyed a longstanding good relationship and partnership. We've had our issues over the years, but the partnership is strong and I know that we share a common challenge and the challenge relates to the fact that we both as entities need new revenues and we both need to be cutting expenses. And the loss of this exemption might provide the City with revenues, but I'm concerned of the cost of that move for the City and its citizens. It would certainly put an additional burden on my company and the employees of my company at a time when really we can least afford it and ultimately it's my sense that it will affect our customers and the citizens of Manchester. Our world has changed very dramatically as a wire line company. In fact, because of competition and the prevalence of it and the changing technologies so many of our customers are migrating to wireless. Our wire line business right now, the part of the company that I represent in New Hampshire, really is in peril. Since the year 2000 we've seen a decline in access lines from a high of about 850,000 business and residential lines, to a current total of less than 700,000 access lines and that's just over the period of a couple of years. And I know that this Board

and the Mayor may be under pressure from the Municipal Association to oppose the Bill, but frankly I thank they've ignored the economic situation of my company and other key providers in the state. So I ask you to consider the facts carefully as you make a decision and I appreciate your time and I'll stay as well in the event there are questions later on.

Richard Duckoff, 380 North Bay Street, Manchester, stated:

I want to congratulate this Board for dealing with the many difficult issues before this City and looking so relaxed this evening. I'm here tonight to speak about the Planning Board case for an application for a subdivision at St. Augustin cemetery that came before the Board at the last Planning Board meeting. At that meeting one of the Planning Board members quite properly recused himself, as he's also the Director of Cemeteries with the Catholic Diocese. That particular case was held open, it is still open, it will be reheard on the 11th of March. That member did properly recuse himself, however, I would call that on the field, when a player is on the field. Between meetings that same member has contacted the *Union Leader* trying to change the outcome and the favor of the Diocese. He has also contacted the young gentleman who is going to be on Channel 9 tonight at 11:00 PM. The young gentleman who took the pictures, the 2002 pictures that show the gravestones. I submit that there is a questions whether or not that there shouldn't be even an appearance of any conflict of interest by the Planning Board and that if there is a conflict of interest here, even though it's between Planning Board meetings, I just wanted to bring this to the attention of the Board.

Scott Harris, 1025 Chestnut Street, Manchester, stated:

I am here tonight to address the issue of the halfway house that was described in this morning's *Union Leader*. I urge you to consider that closely. I think that Manchester does more than it's fair share in terms of providing for the needs and settlement former prisoners and I think it's an issue that has to be carefully considered. It's a small issue at this time with respect to this small halfway house, but it's a much larger issue to the if viewed in perspective. So I would urge close consideration before you approve that.

Mayor Baines advised that if there is no one else present wishing to speak, a motion would be in order to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to adjourn and receive and file all communications submitted.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk